

Parish matters

News from Wychavon District Council for Town & Parish Councils



November 2016

Welcome to the latest issue of Parish Matters. In this edition we have updates from our Business and Rural Crime Team and on the work we've been doing through the South Worcestershire Rural Communities Programme, we've details of our Community Recognition Awards, Council Tax advice for 2017, and much more. As ever, you are welcome to share the news from Parish Matters in your own newsletters and other publications. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Jack Hegarty - Managing Director

Rural Communities Programme

The South Worcestershire Rural Communities Programme, which works with parish councils and community groups to support older and vulnerable people in rural Wychavon, has been progressing well over the summer in taking services out to rural areas and letting parish councils and community groups know about issues that worry residents.

Since April, the team from Wychavon, along with key partners such as the Fire Service, Rooftop Housing, Act on Energy and the Worcester Association of Carers amongst others, have written to and knocked on 888 doors across the district. We have made 273 referrals to services, helping people to access the support they need and have given out 778 pieces of specialist advice and guidance.

Communities involved in the programme are being made aware of issues affecting their residents and several, such as Pinvin, are putting on activities to help residents connect with each other. Some local villages have also taken matters into their own hands and are doing their own assessments by using the village health check on the Rural Communities Programme website – www.wychavon.gov.uk/rural. The website is also a great place to find out about what other villages are doing to help their residents and find helpful toolkits.

Over the next few months we will be revisiting some of the parishes we have worked with over the summer before restarting the door knocks in March 2017. For further information, please contact David Manning on 01386 565478 or email david.manning@wychavon.gov.uk.

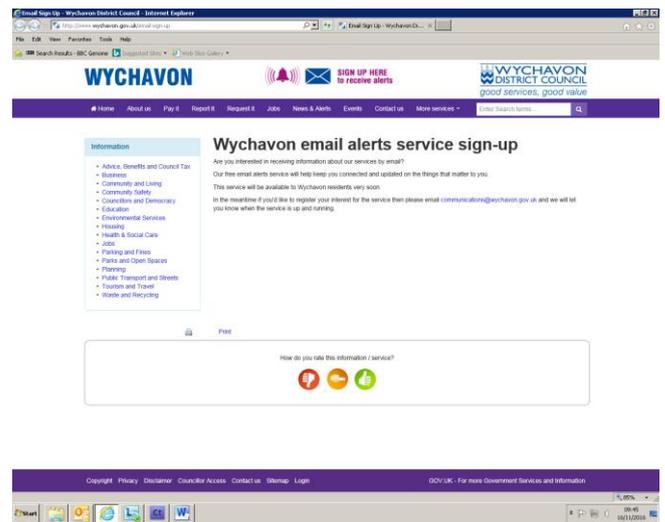
Parish Flood Alleviation Support Grants – final call

There is some limited funding still available for parish councils to use on minor flood related projects. If you believe you might have a scheme that you can deliver, please contact Tony Jones, Engineering Consultancy

Manager at Wychavon, on 01386 565350 or email tony.jones@wychavon.gov.uk. The deadline is 30 November so you'll have to be quick.

E-mail system

We have a new e-mail system to provide alerts to residents and businesses on a variety of topics. To see what it's all about you can [have a look here](#), search online for 'e-mail sign up Wychavon', or just go to www.wychavon.gov.uk/email-sign-up and follow the instructions (there's also a prompt from our website homepage – just look for the purple envelope). The new system will help us provide another cost-effective way of getting our messages out to residents, and your help getting people to sign-up is most welcome.



My Local Area

Our popular My Local Area webpage has been transformed. It is now clearer and easier to use and people can find out a wealth of information about a property or area; this includes 'Where's my nearest', electoral details, Council Tax and Business Rates information, as well as a direct link to waste and recycling collection days. For those who want to see all this information on a map, a quick switch to 'map' view will display this information geographically. The map view also supports features such as an option to select planning applications and provides links to our online planning pages. This is a valuable online resource and we'd encourage you to use it and share it with people you know. Just go to www.wychavon.gov.uk and click on the link from the homepage.

Wychmove



Our Wychmove scheme is a social lettings agency service that we have launched to help Wychavon residents access privately rented accommodation, but also to provide landlords with more security when it comes to the letting of their property. We understand the barriers some residents have in accessing the private rented sector, as well as the issues landlords face when the tenancy has not been successful. We aim to negate these problems by matching the most suitable tenant to the property and offering a robust service throughout the tenancy to landlords. We offer landlords three levels of service:

Matching a tenant – a free service that involves us finding potential tenants suitable for a particular property and then referring them to the landlord. We work with the landlord so that the prospective tenants can view the property and the landlord will make the final selection based on information provided by Wychmove.

Assisted Letting – Wychmove will source a tenant suited to the landlord's requirement for their property and set up the tenancy so that the landlord can take over the managing of the property. At the end of the tenancy we can do a check-out with the landlord, which is included in our competitive fees for this service.

Managed – this service will include the same package as the assisted let, but will include the day-to-day management of the property, quarterly inspections, and the Wychmove team will be the point of contact for any tenancy issues for either the tenant or landlord. Again, we aim to be competitive with the fees that we charge for this service.

Wychmove can also offer landlords individual services suited to their specific needs as and when required. For more information contact Sarah Cook, Private Sector Accommodation Officer, on 01386 565114, email sarah.cook@wychavon.gov.uk or go to www.wychmove.co.uk.

Affordable housing

We have appointed a new Housing Development Officer, Emma Jordan. Emma has worked in various affordable housing related roles at local authorities and housing associations since 1993, and is excited to be taking on this new challenge to obtain robust evidence for housing need and maximise the development of affordable housing across the district, particularly in rural areas. Some recently completed affordable rural developments in Wychavon include:

Wickhamford – 3 x 2 bedroom new affordable homes completed this summer by Rooftop Housing Group in Sandys Lane, Wickhamford. This scheme was delivered thanks to our funding, as well as the funding obtained from the Homes and Communities agency.



Cleeve Prior – a further six properties at Haywood Way in Cleeve Prior, also provided by Rooftop Housing Group, were completed in January this year. These were 2 x 3 bedroom houses and 2 x 2 bed houses at affordable rent, and a further 2 x 2 bed houses for shared ownership.



If you'd like to know more about affordable housing schemes, contact Emma Jordan on 01386 565386 or email emma.jordan@wychavon.gov.uk.

Worcestershire Viewpoint 2016

Worcestershire Viewpoint is the Citizens' Panel partnership between Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City Council, Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Wyre Forest District Councils, and the three NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in Worcestershire. Any Worcestershire resident aged 18 or over can join the panel to have their say on local public services; simply complete the Viewpoint joining form to register. If you'd like to know more or would like to see the 2016 Viewpoint results – in which 83% of residents are satisfied with the local area as a place to live, and 73% are satisfied with the way we run things – then go to www.worcestershire.gov.uk/viewpoint.

Entrepreneurial not municipal

We're pleased to announce that we've been shortlisted for a Local Government Chronical (LGC) award in the 'Entrepreneurial Council of the Year' category. The reason we've been shortlisted is for our innovative investments and the way we approach our work like a business rather than your typical council. We have to go to London to give a 25 minute presentation selling why we should win, before finding out the result in March next year.

Computer skills and Wi-Fi grants

Rooftop Housing Group working with Go-ON Worcestershire (which is a group made up of a whole host of organisations such as the county and district councils, the Department for Work and Pensions and voluntary/community groups) are aiming to increase basic computer skills for local residents and increase the number of places for residents to get online for free.

They have a small amount of funding available to support the costs of installing Wi-Fi into parish halls and other community venues. The funding would include the basic installation and the first year's running costs, and they are particularly keen to support rural parishes to develop free Wi-Fi hubs, as poor public access to the internet in rural communities has been highlighted by the Go-ON Worcestershire partnership.

Grants of up to £500 are available, so if you would like to apply for funding for installation of Wi-Fi into a community venue, please contact Kate Gallant, the Chair of Go-ON Worcestershire and Community Investment Manager at Rooftop Housing Group, on 01386 420800 (ext. 116) or email kate.gallant@rooftopgroup.org.

Go-ON would also like to offer support to community groups in your area that would like to set up a local 'get online' group to help people develop basic internet skills. They have tablets, tutors and expertise available so that they can bring the internet to people within their communities.

If you would like help to set up a local computer club in your parish, please contact Andrew Gibbins, Digital Connector, on 01386 420800 (ext. 263) or email andrew.gibbins@rooftopgroup.org.

Healthy, happy, active and supported

A big thank you to all of you who responded to our survey about the physical and emotional health of your communities. In all, 49% of parish and town councils responded and 83% of you agree that you have a role to play in improving health. You gave us a wide range of examples of what's going on to help make your communities healthy and happy. A summary of the survey results is attached (please see the PDF). If you didn't get a chance to respond do let us know what's happening in your area. We shared the survey results at our recent Partners Together event, which a wide range of partner organisations attended. As well as hearing about the national, regional and local health priorities from speakers, we looked at how local partners were helping to address this issue at very local level. Four workshops took a practical approach to what we might do together to address issues such as alcohol, physical activity, mental health and community health initiatives in the district. We'll post a write-up from the event on our website at the following address soon – www.wychavon.gov.uk/partners-together-events.

Business and Rural Crime Team update

The Business and Rural Crime Team continue to be well received by residents and businesses throughout south Worcestershire. The scheme predominantly addresses the concerns of rural communities who feel vulnerable due to police resources being stretched and re-aligned to areas of greatest need, which invariably means to the larger towns and cities. The team have visited nearly 1,000 victims of crime and issued over 800 items of security equipment since the start of the initiative in April 2015.

Following on from the creation of Wychavon's first property marked village (Cropthorne), Abbots Morton and Elmbridge will be the next two parishes where every household will be issued with a property marking kit and signs advertising the fact will be erected throughout the villages to deter would-be thieves.

Elsewhere, in an attempt to address farmers' concerns over increasing thefts, we have successfully created our first farmers' discussion group based around Defford. New farm alarms have been looked at along with other crime prevention measures and sources of funding. This idea will hopefully be rolled out to other areas with a view to creating numerous focus groups and further reducing crime.

We continue to attend parish council meetings to give presentations on crime prevention, and more recently we have been increasingly involved in raising awareness of cyber crime and the ways that people can protect themselves from this ever increasing menace.

For further information or advice please contact the Business and Rural Crime Coordinator, Simon Thompson, on 01386 565383 (Monday to Wednesday only) or email simon.thompson@wychavon.gov.uk.

Parish litter picks

In the spring of 2017, we will see the Great British Spring Clean between 3 – 5 March, an event that is being promoted by Keep Britain Tidy. We are going to be supporting the Spring Clean (www.greatbritishspringclean.org.uk) and we have a number of litter-picking kits ready for anyone who (or any group that) wants to take part. We have also added a new page to our website – www.wychavon.gov.uk/litter-picking – to provide advice for anyone wanting to clean up their parish and to provide some recognition to those that do. The webpage links to [Keep Britain Tidy](http://www.KeepBritainTidy.org), where you can find information on all of the campaigns they run to eliminate litter, improve local places and end waste.

Council Tax

Town and parish clerks should have by now received 2017-18 budget requirement forms, for completion and return to us by Friday 3 February 2017. The letter that accompanied the forms explains the action that needs to be taken and the information we need know about your budget and Council Tax requirement for next year. Should you need more information on this, please contact Julie Jones on 01386 565505 or e-mail julie.jones@wychavon.gov.uk.

We'd like to remind you of the potential for the Government to call for local referendums where there are excessive increases in Council Tax by town and parish councils. Just below is an extract from the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation Paper (DCLG, September 2016). It reads:

"We propose that referendum principles are introduced for local precepting authorities (town and parish councils) whose Band D precept is higher than that of the lowest charging district council for 2016/17 (£75.46), and which have a total precept for 2016/17 of at least £500,000. These parishes would face the same referendum principles as shire districts: increases of less than 2% or up to and including £5 (whichever is higher) can be set without triggering a referendum."

Whilst there are no town or parish councils within Wychavon falling into this category at the moment, there is a further question in the consultation about extending these principles to all town and parish councils given the number of high Council Tax increases in 2016-17.

The return deadline of Friday, 3 February 2017, will hopefully allow time to address any final announcements from the Government on referendum principles.

The following may also be helpful when considering your budget requirement:

The Council Tax base for each town or parish area is recalculated annually. It may increase (for example, there may be additional properties in your area) or it may decrease (for example, there may be additional single person discounts or empty properties). Banding changes to individual properties may also cause the tax base to move up or down. We are planning to set Council Tax bases for each town or parish area and for the district overall, for the year 2017-18, at our Executive Board meeting on 11 January 2017.

We will notify town and parish clerks of the calculated Council Tax base for their town or parish that has been published in the report to Executive Board during the first week in January, although clearly these may be subject to change at the Executive Board meeting, so you may wish to plan your budget setting meetings around this.

The grant that we give you to offset your budget requirement will be frozen at 2016-17 levels. The band D

Council Tax charge for any town or parish council can be worked out using this formula:

Band D Council Tax = precept/Council Tax base, where precept = budget requirement less grant to offset your budget requirement.

We then apply the relevant proportion to arrive at the Council Tax for each band.

So, if the Council Tax base changes, this will impact on the level of Council Tax, even if the precept has remained the same and any percentage increases or decreases in the town/parish council element of the Council Tax will be shown on Council Tax bills.

If you have any questions on Council Tax base calculations or tax setting, then please call Vic Allison, Deputy Managing Director, on 01386 565586 or e-mail vic.allison@wychavon.gov.uk.

Parish councils and the Transparency Code

Parish councils with annual turnover not exceeding £25,000 are now required to comply with the [Smaller Authorities' Transparency Code](#) in publishing information online. The Government, through the National and County Associations of Local Councils, is providing funding (covering laptop purchase, website creation or training) to enable such parishes to comply with the Code. We are keen to ensure that all eligible parishes know about the funding, which is only available until 31 March 2017. You can apply [here](#) through the National Association of Local Councils (membership not required). You will also find a useful Frequently Asked Questions document [here](#).

South Worcestershire Citizens Advice Bureau

South Worcestershire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provides free and impartial information, advice and specialist casework services to the public by drop in, telephone or e-mail at various locations across the district including Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore. The service is delivered primarily using highly trained volunteers (supported by a small paid management team) who use an information system to help clients find the most cost-effective way to manage the issues they present. In Wychavon these are typically debt, welfare rights and employment, housing and family or personal problems. Karen Edwards, CEO of CAB, said: "Whether you need help with form filling, dealing with an employment dispute, budgeting, negotiating with creditors over your bills, getting the best deal on your energy supplies, or looking at ways to increase your income if you are sick or managing a long-term health issue, our services are available through a variety of channels, and appointments can be arranged following a short assessment of a person's needs."

Details of the CAB's opening times and how the service can be accessed are available at www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

A royal celebration

A number of parishes celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday earlier this year, and Barbara Meddings (Deputy Chair for Hindlip, Martin Hussingtree and Salwarpe parish councils) was kind enough to send some photos of their celebrations – a combined community jazz concert and 'picnic in the field' in Martin Hussingtree on Saturday 11 June. In all some 154 residents attended and everyone it would seem had a majestic celebration.



'Picnic in the field' at Martin Hussingtree

War memorials

The Civic Voice (www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/war-memorials/) is currently searching for the earliest First World War memorial. So far from around the country the earliest is 1915 and is in a church window in Wiltshire (see the photo). Anyone with an earlier memorial should send the details to info@civicvoice.org.uk.



The war memorial from Maiden Bradley Church in Wiltshire dating back to 1915. Could this be the earliest First World War memorial?

Community Recognition Awards 2016

We have recently launched our 2016 Community Recognition Awards. Open to the whole community, the awards give those who have volunteered, coached or helped others in the district a chance to gain well deserved recognition for their efforts in helping to make Wychavon a better place to live and work. We are looking for inspirational stories from people of all ages who have helped to improve their neighbourhood, club, society or community during 2016.

The categories for 2016 are:

- Young Volunteer award
- Volunteer award
- Arts Recognition award
- Sporting Hero award
- Community Project award
- Community Group award
- Enabling Healthy Lives award
- Lifetime Achievement award.

To nominate a person, project or community group for an award from the categories listed, simply complete an application form and return it by Friday 3 February 2017. Application forms are available at www.wychavon.gov.uk/recognitionaward. For more information or to talk through your nomination, please contact Tracy Grubb on 01386 565497 or email tracy.grubb@wychavon.gov.uk.



At the 2015 awards

Healthier Choices Food Award

Three more Wychavon businesses have recently received a Healthier Choices Food Award Gold Standard. The businesses, all from Evesham, are The Potted Plant, Word of Mouth Café and JellyPickleJam. The Healthier Choices Food Award scheme, which is run by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, recognises Worcestershire food businesses who offer healthier eating options for adults as well as children, with a gold award for those who also use local food suppliers. The award is also only open to those businesses that have the highest possible five-star food hygiene rating. For full details of the Healthier Choices Food Award scheme go to www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/food.

Previous recipients from Wychavon of the Healthier Choices Food Award are Eckington Manor, Fusion Brasserie (Stoulton), Bridge Street Kitchen (Evesham) and The Angel Hotel (Pershore).

Worcestershire broadband update

Children from Bredon Hancock's Endowed Church of England First School dressed up in onesies for the day – for an unusual lesson in information communications technology (ICT) from the Superfast Worcestershire partnership. The children were learning about some of the technology behind the Superfast Worcestershire programme, which is being led by Worcestershire County Council and BT. The multi-million pound roll-out of fibre broadband – which is part of the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme – is using a range of technologies to ensure as many properties as possible are able to access faster fibre broadband.

As well as the conventional fibre broadband road-side cabinets, Superfast Worcestershire is also building around 80 'all-in-one' cabinets, known as 'onesies', which are used to connect some of the county's more remote communities to the fibre network, including parts of Bredon. The children were given an insight into how the technology works by an apprentice from Openreach, BT's local network business. They were joined by Councillor Adrian Hardman and representatives from the Superfast Worcestershire partnership. As well as Bredon, fibre broadband has recently gone live in additional parts of Badsey, Birtsmorton, Hartlebury, Hillside, Kidderminster, Ombersley, Pershore, Redditch, Rock, Stoulton and the Cross area of Worcester. Elsewhere, areas of Cotheridge, Eardiston and Severn Stoke are now able to access faster fibre broadband for the first time as a result of the programme. More than 62,000 homes and businesses in the county can now order faster fibre broadband as a result of Superfast Worcestershire. The figure increases to around 243,000 when combined with private sector investments by companies such as BT. For further information go to www.superfastworcestershire.com (and you can also check if you can get superfast broadband here), or www.gov.uk/broadband-delivery-uk.



At the superfast 'onesie' in Bredon

Rediscover what you can recycle

Recently Councillor Emma Stokes, along with Denise Ditchburn (our Refuse and Recycling Officer), attended an open day at the Envirosort Materials Reclamation Facility in Norton (that's a MRF in the trade). The purpose of the visit was to have a look around and get a better understanding of what we can recycle here in Wychavon and Worcestershire wide, and also to see just how the process works. It was all a precursor to Recycle Week 2016, which took place from 12-18 September. As part of Recycle Week, which was organised by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), a number of 'Unusual Suspects' – those household items that are slipping through the recycling net – were highlighted. Items like: empty deodorant, hairspray, polish or air freshener aerosol cans; perfume and aftershave bottles; shampoo and conditioner bottles; dishwasher or washing detergent tablet boxes; tetra pack fruit juice cartons; and not forgetting...empty toothpaste tube boxes. To find out more about the campaign go to www.recyclenow.com. And to find out more about what you can recycle in Wychavon, [click here](#).



In the photo: Kate Stott (Severn Waste Services) Denise Ditchburn (Wychavon District Council) and Councillor Emma Stokes, with some of the 'Unusual Suspects' at the MRF in Norton.

Soldiers and battles remembered in Norton

Soldiers from the Worcestershire Regiment and the battles they fought in will be remembered for centuries to come after new information boards were unveiled in the village of Norton. Over eighty guests, including three Second World War veterans, attended the special event in September that was held at St Peter's Garden Centre to mark the servicemen who passed through Norton Barracks.

Five themed boards have been installed around the village with the aim of informing and educating people. They cover the themes of battles, soldiers, The Norton Barracks, The Victoria Cross and the Commemorative Garden.

During the event, which was organised by the Norton Worcestershire Regiment Group, Second World War veteran Barry Freeman was presented with the Legion d'Honneur from Robert Mile, the Honorary Consul for France.

The barracks in Norton were built as a home for the Worcestershire Regiment in 1877, where they remained until 1962. In 1987, the barracks were sold to property developers and converted into apartments with the rest of the site developed as a housing estate. Because the only reference to the barracks and the Worcestershire Regiment in the local area was a small plaque, a group of local residents set out to drive an exciting programme of work to enable greater education of the history of the barracks and provide a lasting legacy of the contribution and the impact of the Worcestershire Regiment. The first project was a Commemorative Garden at St Peter's designed by schoolchildren, and the latest was the new information boards.

This project in Norton was funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund and Severn Waste Fund. We also supported the project, as did Worcestershire County Council, Persimmon Homes and the Mercian Regiment Museum.

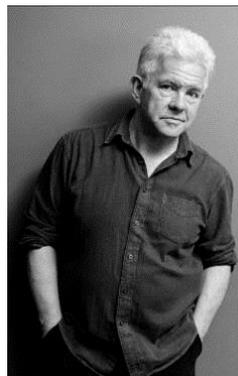


The new boards are unveiled

Shindig's Wychavon autumn programme 2016

Here are two upcoming events...

Words, Music, Glee and Delight at The Fleece Inn on Tuesday 29 November. A terrific evening of entertainment, pitting the Bard of Barnsley's rip-roaring poetry and stand-up repartee against the big sound worlds of multi-instrumentalist Goss. Without doubt the funniest, quirkiest, sharpest improv musical-comedy show out there.



- £10 (standard)
- Box Office: www.thefleeceinn.co.uk and at The Fleece Inn bar, 01386 831173
- Show starts 8pm.

The Remi Harris Project at Hartlebury Parish Hall on Saturday 10 December. This sensationally gifted guitarist and his superb band perform traditional gypsy jazz and swing, infused with influences from bebop, blues, rock and world music. Seriously good.



- £10 (standard)
- Box office: 01299 250808 or 07714 278 860
- Doors and bar open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm
- Waresley Court Road, Hartlebury, DY11 7TQ.

Christmas bin collections

WYCHAVON
Get in touch

On the phone
Make a payment using our automated payments system: 03300 889686
You will need your:
* Invoice number * Card details * Address

Online
Easy, quick and simple - go online
More services, quick to access, easy to use
www.wychavon.gov.uk

Useful numbers

| | |
|--|--------------|
| General enquiries | 01386 565000 |
| Licensing and environmental health | 01905 822799 |
| Planning | 01386 565565 |
| Council Tax and Business Rates | 03004 560560 |
| Housing benefit or Council Tax support | 03004 560560 |
| Bins and recycling | 01386 565018 |
| Housing | 01386 565020 |

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Christmas bin collection dates

| Usual collection day | Festive collection day |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Monday, 26 December | Tuesday, 27 December |
| Tuesday, 27 December | Wednesday, 28 December |
| Wednesday, 28 December | Thursday, 29 December |
| Thursday, 29 December | Friday, 30 December |
| Friday, 30 December | Saturday, 31 December |

Normal collections resume on 2 January 2017

If you have any comments or queries, or need this magazine in an alternative format, please contact T: 01386 565000 E: communications@wychavon.gov.uk

The Christmas collection dates for waste and recycling have now been published. You should be able to copy and paste this image and use it on your website and in any emails and newsletters you might be sending out to your parishioners. You can also get all the latest waste collection and recycling information from our website at www.wychavon.gov.uk/recycling.

A workout for all seasons

WYCHAVON
A work out for all seasons
You dig it and we'll collect it

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Throughout the year

Sign up today
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01386 565018 to register

There are some geographical limitations
* Payment by Direct Debit

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for less than £1 a week

WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value

To enquire about getting a garden waste bin (there are some geographical limitations), call 01386 565018 or go to www.wychavon.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

And finally...

Winter 2016
WYCHAVON
News, stories and services for residents

BUMPER HEALTH EDITION
Free health check and leisure voucher inside

Interview with Droitwich Silver medallist
Rebecca Redfern

Droitwich Leisure Centre investment

Waitrose is coming to Evesham - your questions answered

Chris Boardman MBE
leads out Evesham Cyclefest

Christmas bin collection dates

www.wychavon.gov.uk

WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value

Look out for WYCHAVON, our magazine for residents, which is being delivered to all households in the district throughout November and December.



You are welcome to reproduce any of these articles for your own parish newsletter, magazine or website.

Parish Matters is edited by Spencer Winnett. Contact him with your feedback on 01386 565585 or by emailing spencer.winnett@wychavon.gov.uk.